

# Attachment 1

*Letters of Support*

Dear Honorable Robert J. Jonker,

Reference: *United States of America v. Seann Patrick Pietila*

Case No. 1:23-cr-78

Sentencing Date: March 4, 2024

Your honor, I am writing this letter on behalf of my son Seann Patrick Pietila, thank you for taking the time to read this letter. My name is Brittany Stob 34, I am the biological mother of the defendant. He has resided with me his entire life and never lived outside of my care. I was emancipated at the age of 15 and Seann and I began our life alone until we moved in with my now husband in 2011. I am a military veteran I served from 2007-2015 in the United States Army National Guard, a college graduate with three degrees, a published author, and most recently a youth and adult substance abuse counselor who has worked in the prison setting and public outpatient setting. At the moment though, I am a concerned mother who is desperately missing her son and willing to do whatever I can to help him succeed in life despite his conviction. Being a young mother was not always easy, but what it did for me was give me a very close bond with my son, we literally grew up together with little to no support. Having him away for almost 10 months has been the hardest more heart-breaking event I have had to handle thus far.

For the last 19 almost 20 years I have known my son to be honest, caring, compassionate, patient, and kind, with an integrity most do not see from a person of his age. For example, growing up when Seann would get into some trouble he was always the first to “tattle” on himself, he never lied to me when he knew that he had done something wrong. Seann always struggled in school due to cognitive delays and ADHD, but he never tried to hide anything from me he and was always upfront about the fact he didn’t complete an assignment and why. I guess another good example of this would be his initial arrest and interview with the FBI when he was totally honest and upfront about everything handing over all his passwords and phone lock and answering everything they had to say for over 2 hours. He’s never been one to lie or hide from anything even when he’s in trouble.

Seann has demonstrated his kind caring nature through his care of others and animals. For example, times I would be sick Seann always did what he could to make me feel better, one

of my favorite stories is when I had the flu and Seann cut some baby carrots up and put them in a bowl with warm water and said "Soup mom, to help you," as he got older he would get me a bowl of progressive, but that warmed up carrot water is a core memory of mine. He has always been the first to help me around the house and with anything I ask of him and he's never given me a hard time. He was always the kid on the playground to help out the kids who were having trouble, and when he got older he always made sure everyone in school felt welcomed in his presence.

During COVID, when I was hybrid working and Seann and my daughter were virtually learning at home Seann took responsibility for helping his sister get onto her classes and preparing her lunches. He and his sister are ten years apart, but during this time I truly saw how close they had bonded, and she misses her brother very much. Another example of Seann's kind/Compassionate demeanor is, Seann would spend some weeks during the summer months helping my Uncle who had MS with not only household and yard chores but also personal care. These are just a few examples of many I have.

Seann has always been a sensitive soul, and unfortunately that can lead to depressive episodes. When we moved to Lansing in 2020 we had assumed school would be back in person the following year, but it remained remote and this is when Seann fell into a depression. He was struggling with the schooling so much, I made the choice to pull him out and start looking into a program to obtain his GED as online learning was not working for him or his IEP needs. I also attempted to gain mental health care for him but due to restrictions no one was accepting patients. Without making any friends in person and being 4.5 hours away from his friends in the Upper Peninsula Seann turned to the internet to get attention and a sense of belonging, and this is what has led to this event occurring.

When spring of 2023 came, I had planned to move the kids and I back to the Upper Peninsula so we could focus on getting Seann into a program to complete his schooling and get him his drivers license, basically getting him back focused on life and the future and being closer to family and friends. He was truly excited about this and looking forward to being back up here. He was actually planning to stay with my father and help take care of him so he could have knee replacement surgery. It was 6 days after he had moved back to Pickford that he was arrested. I sometimes think that if I hadn't had to move to Lansing for work during the pandemic I don't think my son would be in this situation, he was happy when he was in the UP he was part of the

boy scouts, he did sports throughout school, he had many friends he would spend time with, and he was truly looking forward to being back up here. You could see the change on his face when he knew the move was coming, he was smiling more and more social and he wanted to be a part of whatever activity we were doing as a family. This was as huge change from the young man who was secluded in his room months prior. Things were looking up.

Seann is very remorseful about what he has done, he is aware that what he was saying in those messages was not right and that others would have seen them as offensive and threatening. At the time of his arrest Seann told me he had no idea that what he was doing in those messages was illegal, but he has come to know the power of what is said even if not intentional cannot be unsaid or in today's world unsent. I know in my heart that my son is not a danger to anyone and that the public has nothing to fear from him once he is released. I realize what was contained in those messages was scary and never should have been sent. Those messages do not accurately reflect him, but a young man who was depressed and didn't know how to ask for help. This whole situation has scared him to the core and he knows he will have to live with this for the rest of his life. Seann tells me all the time that "mom this isn't your fault, it was my stupid choice to talk crap online" but I still feel responsible for not knowing what was being said or that he may have not realized that what was being said was illegal and immoral. I missed something and I am responsible for that.

The way in which the media has portrayed my son makes me terrified he will not be able to get past this the same way a "normal" person who commits a crime may. My son is labeled for the rest of his life and he will have to fight every day to prove he is not that person that "UP anti-Semitic teen". Every time he goes to apply for a job or schooling or anytime someone googles his name, that is going to be the first thing to pop up, he's going to have to fight with that and out last that the rest of his life, and his life has barely just begun.

By the time sentencing comes my son will be 20 years of age. Even at that age my son is not grown, I say that because he still needs my support and guidance to navigate into adulthood, he needs to get his GED, his driver's license, his first job a bank account, how to get his identification card, all things we were going to do this past summer. I know Seann is willing to put the work in, and I am willing to do whatever I can to support him and aide him in achieving all he can. It is my belief being incarcerated would only set him back further in life and not support him moving forward into adult life.

Due to his cognitive/developmental setbacks in life my son has never experienced the same things young man his age should. My son has never had a real first date or even a girlfriend in the physical world, he has had a few “online” girlfriends” but he has never had the experience of taking a girl on a date or having a first kiss. He’s not yet got to experience how it feels to cash that first paycheck or put gas in your own car. I want him to have these experiences in life, I want him to learn from this and grow into a productive member of society and I know he can. Seann wants to put in the work and has expressed this to me time and time again on the phone.

I understand the words of a mother, are just that words from a mother, but that young man means more to me than I can explain in any terms. He’s been my reason for waking up and fighting on since I was 14 years old, it was truly just him and I against the world. Thank you for taking the time to read this and consider my son from my point of view, truly I appreciate it your honor.

Thank you,



Brittany Marie Stob

Dear Honorable Jonker

Reference: United states of America V. Seann Patrick Pietila  
Case No. 1:23-cr-78  
Sentencing Date: March 4, 2024

Thank you your honor for taking time to read this letter. My name is Joshua Murley and I am a close family friend of Seann Patrick Pietila. I currently work for Lansing Parks and Recreation and have worked there for about 10-12 years. I have various programs I help run such as an after school program for kids, grades K-7, I help assist with Teen Night ages 13-19 as well being the even clerk and night staff for the different community centers around the city of Lansing.

I got the pleasure of meeting Seann a little over 2 years ago when I was introduced through his mother, who I became friends with. When I first met Seann I noticed right away he was a very shy, kind of timid kid who didn't really talk much, but one thing that stood out is that he was very polite, well-mannered and very respectful. He always responded back with a "thank you" or "no thank you" every time when asked if he wanted or needed anything. Seann is always super appreciative of things people would do for him and when asked to do something like chores or to help out with his little sister he would do it with no issue. I found that pretty impressive as I work with kids and once was a kid myself and know that a lot of kids especially around the teen years will talk back or make a big fuss about having to stop what they were doing to help, but Seann never did that. He was always eager to help and when asked. Especially when it came to helping out with his little sister and the pets of the house. He loved and adored them and would do whatever was asked of him to help.

I mentioned earlier that Seann was a shy and timid kid when we first met and it did take some time for him to let his guard down and let me in. Once he did though it was nothing but love and care for him. I got to know him better and understand him more. He likes Mountain Dew and Taco Bell for a bit, until it tore his stomach up and playing video games. He is a person with hopes, dreams and goals. I was always looking forward to the conversations we had. It was mostly about Star wars, or some new movie or show on Netflix or what type of foods and snacks were good or not. What made those conversations and interactions better was the way he would talk about the things he was passionate about or super interested in, he would light up. The more I got to know Seann the more it seemed like I mentioned before, a shy kid who just wanted to be liked and fit in. He just had a hard time doing that because he was shy and not very social, along with moving to a completely different area during a pandemic where no one was allowed to interact or connect unless through online. He was isolated and I feel like he didn't do well with that and turned to the internet for some kind of interaction or connection to fill a void. I could tell Seann didn't care much for the fast pace city life of Lansing, it was too loud, too many people and he didn't know anyone. He never left the house or made friends, never really put himself in the settings to make friends. I think the whole moving, to a bigger city then where he is from and only known and missed, was a bit overstimulated.

Since Seann has been in custody, I have had the opportunity to talk with him still through calls to see how he has been doing. I think when all this started he didn't really understand or quite know what all that had happened or what was going on. But after being able to talk with I feel like he is realizing that what he did was hurtful and not right and that he needs to make better decisions. Knowing Seann, I know he is capable of realizing mistakes or bad decisions he has made, learning then growing for the better.

Dear Honorable Jonker

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Earlier I stated I got to know Seann and find out he is a kid with hopes, dreams and goals, and from talking with during this whole process he still has that motivation and drive to try reach them.

Seann and his family were planning on moving back to the Upper Peninsula once their lease was up and you can tell Seann was super excited about it. I knew from hanging and talking with Seann over the time we spent that he was. He would go and visit occasionally when living down here and every time he came back he was happy to tell us all the things he did and planned on doing once permanently back in the UP. Seann would talk about the job he had lined up to work when back. He would talk about what he and his friends and the things they would, like go outside and go to places. He never did that here in Lansing, He never went outside or hung out with anyone. Seann was excited to start the process of getting his driver's license and Social Security card. He mentioned before and now still that he would like to take the steps to get into classes and finish school. Seann is technically an adult by age wise, but mentally and even society level wise he is not. He hasn't experienced hardly anything a person his age should have experienced by now, but is still young and has his whole life ahead of him.

Being able to get out and have these goals and dreams in mind is a big help. Seann has a plan in place to better himself for not only him but for society as well. He has a great and loving support system behind him that is willing to do whatever it takes to make sure he is on the right track and knows that there are people out there who love and care for him. Society would benefit from him as well as Seann benefitting for being back in society. Seann is young and has a lot to learn from life and the experience it provides. He is learning from this one as well. He seems to be himself and not so quiet and depressive when he is interacting with people and the community, feeling as if he is moving forward. When he was isolated he did not do well or make the best decisions. I feel like it would hurt not only Seann but society if we was to be isolated longer. Seann wouldn't be able to get start his new journey to being a positive influence to society right away, isolation may get to him again and society will not be able to see the Seann that the close family and friends that love him see.

A kind, loving, warm hearted kid who just wants to be liked and know that people are there for him. If he didn't know or still feels like he doesn't know if he has people who care, He does! I'm one of them, and I know he has plenty more. Both Seann and the support group that Seann has will do any and everything to make sure Seann is the best person he can be and show the doubters that good people make mistakes and bad decisions, but that does not define who they are or who they can be for the rest of their lives. Thank you again your honor for taking time to read this letter it is greatly appreciative.

Sincerely,  


Reference: *United States of America v. Seann Patrick Pietila*

Case No. 1:23-cr-78

Sentencing Date: March 4, 2024

Dear Honorable Jonker,

I'm Kevin Stob and writing on behalf of Seann Peitila; I'm Seann's Dad, I'm 43 with a nine year old daughter, wife Brittany, and work as Lock and Dam Operator for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sault Locks. Prior to this I worked as a Michigan Corrections Officer for five years and I recently retired from the Michigan Army National Guard with over 21 years, seven years Army prior to moving to the Upper Peninsula, 14 years MIANG.

I've known Seann since he was four years old, his mother Brittany and I dated for a while, Seann and I would play legos, dinosaurs, and lego nintendo games. Then after my last deployment with the National Guard, Brittany and I started seeing each other again, and they moved in with me in summer of 2011 in Sault Ste. Marie. I worked nights at the Prison then, Brittany did the work that made us a family, we'd go to see her family in WI, we took a trip to Chicago, walks around town and playing at the playground, visit my family downstate and her friends in Ishpeming.

I feel I must talk about my time in the service here, as it's hard to ignore the weight that is being placed on Seann for having a few things of mine gathered from 21 years 5 months and 2 weeks in the Army, in his room. Over my time in the service, I was both a Cavalry Scout (19D, Combat Arms) in the active Army, this brought a wealth of knowledge to my time in the Army National guard as a Bridge Engineer (12C, Combat Support). As a Staff Sergeant in my unit, 1437th Multi Role Bridge Company, I was often assigned roles to train soldiers in skills and tasks that I had much more experience in from my time as a Cavalry Scout. I was considered the Subject Matter Expert (SME) in

Individual and Crew Served Weapons, Military Demolitions, Unit and Individual Movement Techniques, Reconnaissance and Observation, Land Navigation, the list could go on. I've been to more military schools and Train the Trainer schools than I can keep track of, Master Gunner was one that trained me on how to run all weapons related training and qualification ranges for my Company and Battalion. I at one time had a small library of Technical and Field Manuals that I used and kept on hand. Several of these were "found" in Seann's room, and I let him have them to read through. He always held an interest in the outdoors and anything I could do to encourage I would. There were Army issue magazines "found" in the basement alongside lots of other military gear. I also have an Inert M-15 training Landmine (used as a doorstop upstairs), and in the basement, an Inert training M-72 Light Anti-Tank Weapon (LAW Rocket Launcher), and linked 7.62mm and 5.56mm training (dummy) rounds. None of my Kit was out on display, or particularly organized, yet how none of these were mentioned let alone taken during the FBI raid on my home stumps me. I can not understand how or who picked and chose what to take, and what to hold against him. I can not understand how things that I lent to him or were in the basement, he never really went into, can be used to prosecute him. Seems wrong or short sighted to use what is clearly my things to make him look like an extremist is all.

Seann has always been a quiet kid, that keeps to what is familiar to him. While he's always had video games, he did get out and try new things. After we first moved to Pickford in summer 2012, Seann would try out various activities any kid would want to do. While fast, he didn't have the size for football, and he didn't seem to like the physical nature of basketball, and he didn't take to track. I remember him ripping around our field in his go-kart with his buddies, building rockets for science fair, him being so proud of himself to have finally figuring out the kick start on his dirt bike

The Boy Scouts that he'd joined when we moved to Pickford, stuck for the longest. He seemed to get a good friend group from there that has kept around in one way or another from what I can tell. Plays video games with several still, in person and online, talked about getting a job at Meijer with another when he got back to the U.P.;

with a goal of getting down south with yet another boy scout friend after he'd gotten his GED done.

For a majority of this, from way to early, I've been hard on Seann, I expected more than a child should have to be, I yelled, I was loud, had over the top raving outbursts demanding answers from a young man who didn't know what he'd done to get such a poor reaction. I was a lousy person to Seann for many years, even while actively working with a VA therapist during much of the time. I treated Seann much like I would treat any competent adult, soldier or inmate that I was used to at that time; not like the young man he was. I lacked the understanding that Seann doesn't process things the way I do, that he learns things differently than I was used to teaching them. He ran away because I took his playstation away, even had to call the police, have all my local friends out looking for him. So things were bad between us for a while, it caused trouble through the whole family at times. It seemed no matter how much or what I tried I couldn't be a good Dad to Seann. Yet it's all coming around, it's taken a lot of effort but Seann and I have been able to talk, I've really had to show him my effort to be a better Dad and slowly we've gotten to have a relationship. Admittedly, it's been taking a big step back from trying to direct a relationship, to just letting form naturally, letting Seann dictate more how the two of us interact, to let the relationship be more casual. We would talk more about some of the games he played, about what he thought about after school. Just seemed like normal stuff for a modern teenager.

I don't know much about online games, but I play the game Fallout that we would talk about and he'd show me all the different things you can do on the online part of the game, and help me figure out how to beat parts of the game I'd get hung up on. Seann introduced me to a new game called Skyrim, and I played that quite a bit over the years on and off. Seann helped me learn to be a bit of a kid again myself, and enjoy just playing a game like that, to try a new one for the first time in years and to be more relatable.

Him being a gamer was never really what I'd expect out of a young man yet its the world that both accepted him and the world that had an influence on him. Brittany had moved to Lansing to continue her education and the kids went with her. The move

coincided with the uptick in Covid, and Seann and his sister became online students. Everything was shut down, all of the benefits of both kids moving to a big city, the new exciting experience became the Lockdown in a full sense of the word. Seann stepped up big thou and helped his sister navigate her online schooling for one full and one half online school year, while getting lost on his own school work. Seann would make sure his sister ate lunch, kept an eye on the dogs while Brittany worked, he became an excellent example of who a big brother should be. Seann fell behind in his school work and the Lansing school district didnt even notice. It wasn't until he would have been graduating, that they called Brittany to address his absence. Before all this we'd known, discussed and planned with Seann, Brittany and myself, about him getting into one of several GED options, all before the school system even realized they had forgotten this student for the better part of three years.

Seann came around during all this Covid shutdown stuff though. Oftentimes Brittany would have to work when I could have the kids in Pickford, and I'd often have to work while they were here also. He was more thoughtful, you could tell the times he would go out of the typical teenager norm and surprise you by having done the dishes, made something to eat for him and his sister, and fed the dogs. He would smile and laugh and joke around more. I think all of us were learning to appreciate each other, love better, because of the shared stress of our families lockdown separation. I think that led to high hopes we all had about getting everyone back to the U.P.. To get our feet back under us again as a whole family, maybe we were playing catch up on some things, but we were excited to get things rolling in the right direction again. We even faced down a shock about the Lansing school district and our daughter the week prior to moving, with a family strength that really made me take notice. Even with that LSD, we were on track for a good summer.

Yet, things changed, right as things were about to come together, Seann was online and got into a conversation that has changed the course of his life forever. I don't know who he was trying to be in that, a guess, maybe just not being the skinny kid, wanting to sound tough. If so I could have related, I've sure made mistakes in my life and being seen as "tough" played its part in many parts of my life. Since Seann's arrest I've wondered if the internet was as much of my teenage years as it has been for

Seann, how much trouble could I have gotten into? I've always had a "big mouth" or "my mouth" got me in trouble, I can just see how easy it would have been for me to "run my mouth" on the internet and say something stupid. In my own way I way.

I don't think anyone who's known him would have guessed Seann would have anti semantic expressions, they're surprised, most commonly said is acting tough on the internet. A kid without a good outlet is an oversimplification of my thoughts of his mentality. I know that ignorance isn't an excuse. I just wish I'd have taught him better over the years. Some of the best advice I've gotten from an old friend is, "Eyes and ears open, mouth shut." That really came into play these last many years for me. I'd tried to express that to Seann also over the years but I think he took it as more of a turn-a-phrase. I'd hope that in whatever and wherever Seann's life takes him he can see the value in observing the world around him and then waiting to thoughtfully expressing himself. I have no doubt that this has been an eye opening experience for my son to say the least and the weight of it has been pressing on him, he's experiencing what I'd never thought he would. By speaking without thought, concern and heartlessly for others he's stepped right into the world of an adult, I'd just like to be there to help that young adult when this has come to its conclusion. He's going to need it.

Respectfully,



Kevin Stob

Reference: *United States of America v. Seann Patrick Pietila*

Case No. 1:23-cr-78

Sentencing Date: March 4, 2024

Dear Honorable Jonker,

My name is Patrick James Eman, I am the grandfather of Seann Pietila. I am 66 years old, a Navy Veteran and retired from Potlach Lumbar company in K.I. Sawyer, Michigan. I reside in Ishpeming, Michigan. I'm writing this letter to you to let you know just how much my grandson means to me and the type of person he is from my eyes. Seann's life started off hard, fighting for his life, he was born at 3.11lbs and that day I almost lost both my daughter and grandson. Seann spent the next 48 days in the NICU at Marquette General and everyday his mother, myself, and grandmother were there. He's my first grandchild and he means the absolute world to me, I love him so very much.

I know my grandson committed this crime and I am not here to argue that. With my 19 almost 20 years of knowledge of who Seann has become I cannot see him ever harming anyone or intentionally inflicting harm upon anyone. Here are some examples from our life that may provide some insight into why I say this. I am an avid hunter of bear, deer, and most small game. Seann knows how much I enjoy hunting but he hasn't shown any interest in the sport and once told me that he could never shoot anything, I had also told him that when I pass away all my hunting rifles and guns would go to him as long as he had passed his hunter's safety course, but he was never interested in doing the class because he didn't want to hurt anything. He has always been a gentle soul and very caring, when he would come up to visit in the summer before my brother passed of M.S. Seann would help him with his day to day chores on the property and never ask for anything in return he simply wanted to show that he cared and listen to two old men pass stories from one generation to the next. My grandson has always been a sensitive boy, who was able to pick up on others emotions and feelings and he always knew what to say to make you feel better in those down moments. It upsets me that in his moment of depression he didn't reach out to me and instead turned to computers and the internet to gain negative attention or try to "impress" someone he met online. I hate computers your honor and Seann knows, I don't even have internet access at my home, which was always a shock for Seann when he would

come visit, but he made the best of all the outdoor time and close family times we had without all that gaming and internet.

Another thing your honor, Seann was supposed to come stay with me this past summer so I could get my knees replaced, he said he would stay with me so I wouldn't have to go to the nursing home for recovery. I know that had he not been arrested he would have come to help me. My wife passed away from COVID in 2020 and my doctor won't do the surgery unless I have someone staying with me, and Seann said he would and he would help me with all the things I would need assistance with. He was willing to give up his summer to come spend time with me and help me that's another reason I know my grandson is a good person.

Seann has had difficulty in school with learning, maybe due to being premature, and I know his mother was looking for a program prior to his arrest to get his GED and get him into a trade and I can truly see him succeeding in that path of life. I think he needs to find a goal and keep himself focused and he can achieve anything. This whole experience has been eye opening to him, and from what he's expressed to me he is looking forward to growing from this and he will not make this choice ever again, he has been looking forward to starting his adult journey and obtaining his GED, driver's license and a job. He doesn't have the same maturity level as your typical 19-year-old he has always been trying to catch up and I just hope that this won't hinder his success in life as he's struggled so much.

I can say that I don't foresee any more legal issues with Seann and do not fear for the public or anyone if he is released this whole ordeal has scared him to the core and being away from his family for the first time on top of being in legal troubles has been life changing. I can see Seann turning this situation into a valuable learning experience and using this to motivate him to become the best version of himself. I miss my grandson so very much and love him more than I can express, I hope this letter finds you well and you are able to see him as the young caring, sensitive man I know him to be. I could go on and on about him, but I leave this choice in your hands.

Thank you,



Patrick James Eman